

STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning & Economic Development Committee **DATE:** 9/20/16

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SUBJECT: Update on Potential Changes to UDO, Re: Small-Scale Residential Infill

Summary

A staff update on the Planning & Urban Design Department's progress toward developing possible changes to zoning regulations for residential districts allow additional small-scale residential development.

Background

On February 23, 2016, staff presented to City Council an overview outlining current regulatory barriers to residential infill and potential changes that staff was prepared to investigate. Since that time, staff conducted analysis to better determine possible changes to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Staff held two public forums to gather public input, which were held on July 14, 2016 and August 11, 2016. Approximately 80 participants participated in each of those workshops. Surveys were distributed at the workshops and online through Open City Hall in order to collect input from the public. Although the online surveys are still being consolidated, the results from the paper submissions are attached. Staff developed a website for these considerations where a version of the public forum presentation is available for online viewing:

<http://www.ashevillenc.gov/Departments/CommunityRelations/Small-ScaleResidentialInfill.aspx>.

Review and Analysis

City rules that were in place in the 1948 zoning code promoted the efficient use of residential property that provided a variety of housing types. Old neighborhoods included single-family homes but they also provided multifamily buildings on a small scale that was compatible with the scale of those neighborhoods. In 1948 multifamily properties were permitted in every zoning district while today they are only permitted in 1/3 of residential districts. In addition, today we disincentivize multifamily housing by requiring those projects to maintain as much land per unit as single-family projects. The result is that development of small-scale multifamily in Asheville has effectively disappeared over the last 50 years, significantly reducing the current variety of housing options while putting downward pressure on residential densities throughout the city, perpetuating a sprawling development pattern.

To bring more housing variety back into the mix, Staff is proposing the following:

1. Reduce minimum lot width and lot area requirements by 20% for all residential districts
2. Permit duplexes by right in all residential zoning districts
3. Allow for 'lot area averaging' to support the development of large parcels while preserving homes

4. Incentivize multifamily by allowing extra units for every 1,000 square feet of parcel area above the minimum; and,
5. Include design guidelines for multifamily projects over two units.

The majority of survey respondents support the considerations, although many have concerns that relate primarily to parking and infrastructure, especially stormwater mitigation. Staff intends to address these concerns by reviewing the existing parking requirements to ensure that adequate parking is being provided, and will also review the existing stormwater regulations to ensure that a minimum amount of permeable space is preserved on all residential and, possibly, non-residential projects. Staff will coordinate with the appropriate departments on these considerations. Staff will also consider possible UDO changes relating to sidewalks.

Financial Impact/Resources

Although staff has discussed financial implications with Finance, we have no determination at this point. We expect that, incrementally over time, the reduction to lot standards could allow for the creation of approximately 3,500 additional parcels, which is equivalent to about 10% more residential parcels. This estimate does not take into account other site constraints, such as topography, floodplains or other local conditions that would preclude parcel subdivision. Likewise, the changes to multifamily districts is expected, over time, to see the addition of more units within the city where public services are already provided so the increase in the tax base is likely to be positive.

Next Steps

Staff is seeking input from PED before moving forward with developing draft UDO ordinances to bring to the Planning & Zoning Commission as early as next month.

Attachments:

- (1) Public Forum #1 Presentation
- (2) Written Survey Responses from Public Forum #1 and #2 (online responses pending)